After winning the state championship members of the women’s swim team have set their sights on more challenging and prestigious goals. In Greensboro earlier this month sophomore Lauren Rhodes and freshman Nora McCullough both reached the time cuts necessary to qualify for the Olympic Trials. There they will join sophomore Elsa Welshofer who obtained her time cut last August. The trials, which will determine new members of the Olympic team, will be held in Omaha, Nebraska at the end of June.

For Rhodes this achievement has been a long time coming. She began swimming competitively when she was just five years old and has been striving to meet the Olympic Trial qualifying times for over a year. Her hard work was finally rewarded when she reached 26.32 seconds in the 50 meter free style and 56.95 seconds in the 100 meter free during Senior Sectionals in Greensboro a few weeks ago.

“I was so excited that I got my cut because I’ve been trying for it for over a year,” said Rhodes.

Welshofer, who has been swimming since she was six, had been working towards the cut for the past five years. She finally reached the time she needed last August by swimming the 100 meter butterfly in a swift 1:01:69, which is three tenths of a second faster than the cut time.

“I was so excited that I started crying after I saw my time. It was kind of embarrassing but I was just so happy,” said Welshofer.

After watching the last Olympics, in 2008, McCullough decided that her next goal would be to qualify for the trials. Her hard work paid off at Senior Sectionals where, alongside Rhodes, she beat the time cuts for the 50 meter freestyle and 100 meter freestyle.

All three swimmers compete for MAC, which Welshofer says is the most competitive swimming organization in the area. They practice 9 times a week, with some days of practices early in the morning and then again in the afternoon. Despite this grueling schedule all three ladies still love swimming and wouldn’t think of quitting.

“It’s just something that I’ve been doing for so long, I couldn’t imagine not doing it,” said McCullough.

Even after reaching their cuts they can’t relax because the competition at trials will be fierce. Rhodes said that over 2,000 swimmers from across the country will be there, with only the top sixteen being selected to advance to semis. After semis the field will be narrowed to eight for finals, where two swimmers from each event are chosen for the Olympic squad.

“I’m kinda nervous going to the meet cause it’s one of the biggest meets in the country, but I’m still excited,” said Rhodes.

Regardless of their performances at the trials, these three swimmers have already achieved something that many people only dream about and for that they should be commended. Good luck at trials ladies.